

Lackland training is more than just basic

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We all know Lackland Air Force Base is the “Gateway to the Air Force.” For the 45,000 trainees that pass through the San Antonio, Texas gates each year a rigid six-week basic military training program awaits them that in the end bestows upon them the title of airman. For 80 Ohio Air National Guard members this training took on a different shape and meaning.

On January 12, a C-130 from the 179th Airlift Wing, Mansfield, took flight loaded with members of the Ohio Air National Guard from every flying and ground unit across the state. The aircraft carried first sergeants, command chiefs, personnel directors and specialists, medical personnel, recruiters and even Ohio’s chief-of-staff.

“We wanted to combine important training with an orientation to Lackland,” said Master Sgt. Wes Smith, recruiting and retention superintendent. “Some people have not been back to

Lackland since they went through basic training, and in some cases that could be more than 20 years ago.”

The first half of the weeklong training was used for the various offices to discuss issues important to them on a state-wide level and to receive some valuable upgrade training. Medical personnel were specifically brought on the trip to take a closer look at problems with physicals that prevent trainees from continuing in the BMT environment.

“We need you to tell us what we can do to help these troops out,” said Col. Robert Baylor, state executive support staff officer, to the contingency on the first day. “These troops are already going through a tough time, let’s make it easier.”

Recruiters and human resource advisors focused on recruiting and retention goals and learned about a program known as AFRISS. The program, supported from Randolph Field, is an automated tool to help generate leads and process potential applicants into the Air National Guard.

“Ohio is probably the best state in the union in recruiting bar none,” said Lt. Col. Barry Holder, National Guard Bureau Recruiting and Retention Office liaison.

Personnel representatives learned about the virtual military personnel flight program and a variety of other automated tools, such as the military personnel data system that tracks information and vital metrics on everyone in the Air National Guard.



Simulated warfare and field training exercises are conducted during the fifth week of training known as Warrior Week.

After two and half days of meetings, briefings and trainings, the Ohio contingency was ready to turn it over and let someone else be the trainee. On January 15, they received their orientation briefing to basic training.

Chief Master Sgt. William Seiler, ANG liaison to basic training, welcomed the Buckeye crowd and proceeded to tell them the basics of basic. In a two-hour period he shared with them what basic training is all about, how they train, who they train, warrior week, graduation and the challenges that will face BMT in the upcoming years.

Seiler told them if they left this experience with anything it would be to remind young recruits to have a checking account with checks and to bring their glasses to BMT.

The next day the group went to the warrior week site, established in 1999. During warrior week, trainees are provided with a field training experience, learning how to set-up tents and live in a field environment. They also complete the confidence course and weapons qualifications; and conduct academic courses in self-aid and buddy care, law

Continued on the next page...



Sgts. Dana Sofranko and George Velez look a little too happy while waiting to see BMT’s confidence course.